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'More of an ethnic cleansing'

Christians also threatened by leaders in Sudan

JUBA, South Sudan (BP) — Alleged ethnic cleansing that Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has undertaken against black Africans in the Nuba Mountains also is aimed at ridding the area of Christianity, according to humanitarian workers.

By targeting Christians in the Nuba Mountains, which also is populated by adherents of Islam and other faiths, military force helps the predominantly Arab regime in Khartoum to portray the violence as "jihad" to Muslims abroad and thus raise support from Islamic nations, one humanitarian worker said on condition of anonymity.

In South Kordofan state — on Sudan's border with the newly created nation of South Sudan and home to sympathizers of the southern military that fought in Sudan's long civil war — Bashir's military strikes are directed at Muslims as well as Christians, but churches and Christians are especially targeted, the worker said.

"The ongoing war against Christians and African indigenous people is more of an ethnic cleansing in that they kill all black people, including Muslims," the worker said, "but they give specific connotation to the war in targeting Christians to secure funding and support from the Arab and Islamic world by saying this war is a religious war; (in) so doing, they get huge support from those countries."

The government in Khartoum is using Russian-built Antonov airplanes to drop bombs, "coupled with state-sponsored militia targeting churches and Christian families," the worker said, noting that the militias are moving in brutal fashion "from house to house searching for Christian and African indigenous homes as the government continues with air strikes."

The Satellite Sentinel Project (co-founded by actor George Clooney) to provide satellite monitoring of abuses in Sudan) has gathered evidence that Antonov



TEACHING LIFE SKILLS — In southern Sudan, Danny Turner teaches a Dinka man how to lasso. Turner and three other volunteers from Oakland Church in Corinth were able to bond with Dinka cattle herders during their 2010 trip through a shared interest in cattle in order to teach HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. The Mississippi men worked in cooperation with International Mission Board representatives in the area. (BP photo)

aircraft have indiscriminately bombed civilian populations in South Kordofan, although after a recent crash the government has said it will no longer use the planes.

Aerial bombardment in the Nuba Mountains, for example, killed the five members of the Asaja Dalami Kuku family who belonged to the Episcopal Church of Sudan on Feb. 25, the humanitarian worker said.

In Kadugli, capital of South Kordofan, at least four church buildings have been razed and more than 20 Christians killed, the worker said.

"The Islamic north sees Nuba Christians as infidels who need to be Islamized through jihad," he said, "but the fact of the matter is this war is ethnic cleansing — a religious as well as political war, indeed a complex situation."

Another humanitarian worker said four church buildings were destroyed between June 2011 and March 2012 in the region. The congregations were affiliated with the Episcopal Church of Sudan, the Roman Catholic



OVER THE TOP — Kenneth Brawner is one of four volunteers from Oakland Church in Corinth who traveled to southern Sudan in 2010 to teach cattle herders about HIV/AIDS while discussing the popular subject of livestock production. Here he carries a sack of cornmeal that was part of a \$5,000 food distribution funded by Southern Baptists. (BP photo)

Church, the Sudanese Church of Christ, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

On June 7 of last year, state-sponsored militia destroyed the office of the Sudan Council of Churches at Kadugli along with

its vehicle, sources also told Compass Direct News.

Provided by Compass Direct News (www.compassdirect.org) through Baptist Press. Used by permission.



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When legislators do the right thing

It's easy to kick around our state's legislators when they don't do something we think they ought to do. We get mad at them when they allow our favorite bill to die in committee. We get mad at them when they pass a bill we don't like. Multiply the state's population by the nearly infinite number of opinions each of us holds on a variety of issues — about which we may or may not really know anything — and a person can arrive at a fairly accurate estimation of a legislator's day.

If the scale tips more heavily in one direction, it's probably in the direction of criticism when legislators don't operate in the manner we believe they should. It's unfortunate that the average citizen tends to harangue his/her legislators a great deal more when we think they've messed up, than support and encourage them when they do something right. There ought to be a balance there.

There ought to be a balance because we know the interests who oppose us on the bills that are important to us are doing their part to support and encourage legislators to see things their way. They oftentimes get what they want because they are striking the balance that so many others of us are lacking.

For example, there are a number of proposals before the current session of the Mississippi Legislature that deal with the sanctity of human life. These are important bills that have the potential to change Mississippi's culture of death that has been brought on by abortion on

demand. These are positive, common sense bills to which many of us have a difficult time imagining there would be any opposition.

• **House Bill (HB) 1390** would require all physicians practicing in an abortion clinic to have admitting privileges at a local hospital. That way, if anything goes wrong during an abortion at a clinic (as is often the case, more than we know) a well-defined continuum of care for the injured patient can be achieved.

HB 1390 would also require that a physician performing abortions be a certified OB/GYN. This is a physician who has undergone additional education and training to specialize in pregnancy, childbirth, and the treatment of women's reproductive health issues.

If a person needs a coronary bypass operation, shouldn't a physician who specializes in heart surgery perform the procedure? If a woman requires gynecologic surgery — and an abortion is surely that — shouldn't a gynecologist perform it?

• **HB 1196** would prohibit an abortion after a fetal heartbeat has been detected inside the mother. Since the cessation of cardiac activity is an important factor in fixing an individual's end of life, why shouldn't a heartbeat also be an important factor in determining an individual's beginning of life?

• **HB 790** would mandate that a physician be present in the room when a mother ingests a chemical abortifacient regimen like RU486/mifepristone, which begins the process of killing and expelling the unborn baby. Women have

died while attempting to instigate an abortion themselves in this legally-allowed manner. What harm can it do for a physician to be in a position to intervene if there are complications (as is often the case, more than we know)?

Yet these positive, common-sense bills have met withering opposition from legislators like Adrienne Wooten of Jackson and Steve Holland of Plantersville.

"Don't come here and tell me you're concerned about my health and my welfare. You're not," said Wooten, a Democrat, during floor debate on HB 1390 in the House of Representatives. Holland, also a Democrat member of the House, told Jackson news media that legislators had been "extremely generous" in passing anti-abortion bills and he was "sick of it."

All these bills have passed the House despite opponent's obstructive behavior, and are now being considered by the Mississippi Senate leadership. Now is the time to call your Senator and tell them you support these positive, common-sense measures to make Mississippi a better place to live. Legislators can be contacted at (601) 359-3770. Legislator's e-mail addresses can be obtained at <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/>.

A call would also be in order to the Lt. Governor, who presides over the Senate and will be instrumental in the passage of these bills. Lt. Governor Tate Reeves can be contacted at (601) 359-3200, and treeves@senate.ms.gov.

Be sure to thank them for being on the side of unborn babies, who can't speak for themselves on the floor the Mississippi Legislature.

The second sermon I ever preached was on the incredible value of life and the inconceivable atrocity of abortion. A local pastor pulled me aside after the message and gave me these words of admonition: "Thom, those are the type sermons that will get you in trouble. You need to stay away from them if you want to have a long ministry."

I was stunned. In my naïveté, I had assumed that most all Christians, especially Christian leaders, would rally around the cause of life for the defenseless unborn. My sermon, I didn't think, was either abrasive or graphic. I simply shared God's Word from my heart about the sanctity of life.

My first church out of seminary was in St. Petersburg, FL. I was honored to serve on the board of a local crisis pregnancy center. I heard countless stories of babies that were saved from abortion, but my eyes were open even wider when a couple showed me their newly adopted baby.

They told me their baby was adopted through the same crisis pregnancy center. They also told me the story that their daughter's biological mother was precariously close to having an abortion before she visited the crisis pregnancy center.

GUEST OPINION:



Singing louder

By Thom Ranier, president
LifeWay Christian Resources

That precious baby mesmerized me. She was in perfect health. She was totally and completely loved by her parents. She was beautiful — but if the intervention had not taken place, she would have been dead.

I have remained active in the cause to save unborn children through different ways over the years, but I confess that since I came to lead LifeWay over six years ago, I have not done much toward this critical cause. I have even wondered how God might lead me to provide leadership where I have been recently silent.

Then I previewed the movie *October Baby*. I admit that I shed tears during and after the movie. I was moved. The movie and its message were powerful. Indeed, I would rank it among the most powerful movies I've ever seen.

After I saw the movie, I knew God had given me new marching orders. Tell the world. Tell anyone who will listen. Get as many people as possible to this movie. I'm pleading with you to tell others about this movie. Get crowds to go see it. They will be moved. More babies will be saved.

Andy Andrews in his little book, *How Do You Kill 11 Million People?*, tells the compelling story of how more than 11 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust. One of the more tragic stories was the eyewitness account of how one German church responded.

We heard stories of what was happening to the Jews, but we tried to distance ourselves from it, because we felt, what could anyone do to stop it?

"Each Sunday morning, we would hear the train whistle blow-

ing in the distance, then the wheels coming over the tracks. We became disturbed when we heard cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized it was carrying Jews like cattle in the cars!

"Week after week the whistle would blow. We dreaded to hear the sounds of those wheels because we knew we would hear the cries of the Jews en route to a death camp. Their screams tormented us.

"We knew the time the train was coming and when we heard the whistle blow we began singing hymns. By the time the train came past our church, we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams, we sang more loudly and soon we heard them no more.

"Years have passed and no one talks about it now, but I still hear that train whistle in my sleep."

Millions of unborn babies are being led to their deaths, but most churches are just singing louder.

What can we do? I urge you to make *October Baby* a priority for you and your church. Go see it this weekend. This movie is so powerful that it will move many to act.

Lives will be saved. Lives will be changed.

Ranier's commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Pro-life advocates decry new regulation

Latest released
Obamacare
abortion clauses
get swift reply

WASHINGTON (BP) — A new federal regulation that includes an "abortion surcharge" and a secrecy clause further confirms the abortion-funding agenda of the Obama administration's health-care reform, pro-life advocates say.

In a March 21 news conference on Capitol Hill, members of Congress and leaders of pro-life organizations denounce the latest rule regarding the 2010 health care law, dubbed by critics as Obamacare. Since the rule's March 12 release, pro-lifers have pointed to two particularly objectionable aspects in a document that is more than 640 pages in length:

- Health insurance plans in state exchanges are prohibited from specifically publicizing the fact they provide abortion coverage. They can disclose such coverage "only as part of the summary of benefits and coverage explanation, at the time of enrollment."

- Every person enrolled in an insurance plan that covers abortion must pay a separate, monthly fee of at least one dollar as an "abortion surcharge."

"So there will be millions, and perhaps tens of millions, of pro-life Americans who won't have a clue that abortion coverage is in their package until the day they sign on the bottom line," U.S. Congressman Chris Smith, R-N.J., said at the March 21 news conference.

The abortion surcharge and secrecy clause in the new rule



ANOTHER CONTROVERSY — U.S. Congressman Chris Smith, R-N.J. (at podium) joined others at a March 21 news conference on Capitol Hill to strongly criticize the latest Obama administration rule endorsing abortion funding health care. The administration had already stirred controversy in past weeks under Obamacare legislation by mandating the free provision of contraceptives on demand. (BP photo provided by office of Congressman Chris Smith)

are only the latest to be confirmed in a series of provisions protested by pro-life advocates and objectors to government funding of abortion.

Pro-lifers have decried the fact the law will permit federally subsidized abortions. Religious liberty advocates have joined pro-lifers in also objecting to a January rule — like the latest one, also from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — that requires all health plans to cover contraceptives and sterilizations as preventive services without cost to employees.

The contraceptives, as designated by the federal government, include some drugs that can cause abortions of tiny

embryos. That rule has a religious exemption critics find woefully insufficient.

The abortion surcharge and secrecy clause are "really a sideshow," said Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), at the news conference.

"It is a diversion from what's going on in the main tent, which is the federal subsidies," he told reporters. "We're talking about a massive new program, so-called tax credits. This is money coming straight out of the federal treasury which is going to subsidize the purchase of these plans for tens of millions of Americans."

The cost to the federal government could be \$80 billion a year, Johnson said.

Smith said: "Now, under Obamacare, taxpayer subsidies in the form of what's called refundable, advanceable credits paid directly to the insurance company — that is to say, taxpayer funds — will subsidize insurance plans

offered on the exchange that include abortion on demand, even late-term abortion."

There are no restrictions on the reasons for abortions or how late they may be performed under the regulation, according to NRLC.

Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life, told reporters, "[A]s we predicted at the time that Obamacare was passed, the state exchanges do cover abortion and will force many Americans to pay for abortion regardless of their own personal, deeply held beliefs."

"That's not American. That's not the country that we live in. Many Americans will be compelled by law into an insurance plan that covers abortion."

Fifteen states have enacted laws barring abortion coverage in health plans that are part of the exchanges, but those opt-out measures fall short of fully protecting pro-life citizens, according to NRLC.

Looking back

40 years ago

Five people are killed and more than 40 worshippers are injured when an attacker hurls two grenades into a crowded evangelical Christian church in Islamabad, Pakistan. At least four Southern Baptists were injured in the March 17 blast.

20 years ago

The Board of Trustees for Clarke College in Newton, meeting in their regular March session, vote that the two-year college affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention should cease to operate after the close of the current academic term which ends in May.

50 years ago

A study by the Home Mission Board finds that Laurel may hold the record for church membership in the nation. A survey conducted by 63 of its churches reveals only 5.5% of residents above the age of nine years have no church affiliation.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Congress tries again

WASHINGTON (BP) — Members of the U.S. Congress are seeking to restrict interstate transportation for minors' abortions after years of failures to enact the legislation. The Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act (CIANA), H.R. 2299 in this Congress, was first introduced in 1998 but has never reached the president's desk for signature. A House of Representatives subcommittee heard testimony from supporters and opponents of the measure in a March 8 hearing. Under the bill, a person knowingly transporting a minor who lives in a state requiring parental involvement for an abortion would need parental permission or a bypass granted by a judge in order for the procedure to occur in another state. The bill would also require abortion providers to notify parents before performing an abortion on an out-of-state minor. Violators would face not more than one year in prison or a fine. In the 28 states that have passed parental involvement laws, "the research shows that there is a statistically significant reduction in the in-state minor abortion rate from anywhere from 13% to 42%," said Michael New, assistant professor of political science at the University of Michigan-Deerborn. Passing a parental notification law has helped the overall health of girls, according to New's research. It has reduced pregnancy in 15-19 year olds and lowered incidents of gonorrhea and suicide in the same age bracket, he said.

BIBLIOPHER

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CEB YLWUHUT, KDNK
GDNAE ELK SU HUWU-
NAUT; EUCKDUH DCT,
KDNK GCNAE ELK SU
IELME.
AJIU KMUAUWU: K1'L

Clue: M = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Acts Thirteen: Thirty-eight

THE TOMB

My mother and dad are buried in another state. I rarely have an opportunity to visit their graves. A few years ago I was in the area and I decided to get up early and not unlike those disciples and followers of Jesus who came to His tomb I made my way to my parents' burial place. It was just before sunrise and I noticed through the early morning haze a figure of a man nearby at another gravesite. After walking around the area and seeing some of my other relatives and my parents' grave markers, I walked over to where the man was and spoke to him. He was polite and obviously grief stricken, lonely, and somewhat bewildered. It was his wife's grave that he was visiting, and without any prompting he told me that he came there every morning. He knew that she was not there, but it was the place where she had been buried. He felt close to her there and he explained that he came every day. Regardless of the weather or whatever was taking place in his life, he came. He went on to tell me that he really could not explain it, but he felt comfort in just beginning his day with God and the companion that the Lord had given him for many years. As we talked I found out that he was a Christian and obviously a man of genuine faith, but he wanted to come each day to visit the tomb.

This Sunday, April 1, many of our pastors are going to be preaching on the tomb. It is somewhat the overlooked piece of the Easter story. Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but then they took His body down and placed Him in the tomb for three days. Usually the burial is only mentioned in order for us to get to the resurrection, but it



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

seems to me that it is worthy of more time and thought than we often give it. The reason I say that is because God gives it a significant place in the story of Jesus.

It was only three days, but oh, what days they were. For if you and I had been living then, we could have made our way out to the burial place and you would see some Roman soldiers who were there guarding the tomb. A Roman seal was across the great stone that covered the opening to make sure that no one disturbed it, but the huge rock was unmoved and despair seemed to be everywhere. The silent gravestones seemed to reverberate the defeat.

One reason I am convinced that the tomb is such an important part of the Easter story is because it is the place that so many people live day after day. It is a world that is unchanging and filled with despair and even when the days come that faith rises up in their hearts, it seems to be empty because nothing changes and the tomb is still there. As we draw close to Easter, spend a moment to think about the unchangeable silence that was there at the tomb. You may hear soldiers' voices and you may even hear disciples quietly whispering, but the work of the crucifixion on the cross

had been accomplished and death reigns.

Let me just suggest to you that these were tough days. Like those disciples you may be having some tough days yourself. There may be bills that are insurmountable, questions that are unanswerable, circumstances that are uncontrollable, and hurt that is unexplainable. They are tough days. You have prayed, hoped, talked, read, cried, and nothing changes. It is a tomb experience and all you hear is silence.

But if you would take a step forward in your thinking, these tough days may be in part testing days. Will you trust God even when the tomb is sealed? Will you trust Him when you do not have answers and no one else seems to be able to change anything? God asked us to trust Him regardless of what is going on and whatever the circumstances may be. It may be that you have tried to wrap your mind around the unexplainable a thousand times. You have asked God why He allows things like that to happen or why doesn't He just intervene and make it all different and silence remains. Can you trust Him? Will you trust Him? You must anchor your faith in Him.

This leads me to the third thought about the tomb and

that is not only is it a tough place and a testing place, but it is a trusting place. You can believe God. Ultimately the story of Easter is the story that even when you do not understand and you do not see how God can make things any different He can and He does. You can trust Him! But you may respond and say, "But my loved one is gone." Maybe there is no changing the circumstances and going back to the way things like you wanted them to be. Maybe your heart is just so empty you do not know how to say, "Lord, I know that my ways are not your ways, but I am going to trust you even when I do not see the light and even though I do not have an understanding of what is taking place."

You can trust Him! Ultimately, the reason so many of our folks will be focusing on the tomb is not for us to spend time looking at death or facing the unsolvable situations in life, but so that we might lift our eyes to the One who is Lord above all. We can and will trust Him!

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

MS POSITIONS

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH IS LOOKING FOR A PIANIST FOR SUNDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS. Please send resumes to Cedar View Baptist Church, Attn: Music Director, 3300 Hwy 305, Olive Branch, Ms. 38654.

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THE BAPTIST *Special Edition*

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COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



Jim Futral

executive director *Mississippi Baptist Convention Board*

The Cooperative Program is the cog that brings all the missional drive and the energy of millions of Southern Baptists together to reach a world for Christ. It makes a difference right at your doorstep, and at every step all the way to the ends of the earth. If you are looking for a vehicle that will make disciples of all people in all nations all of the time and then teach them to observe all things whatsoever we have been commanded by Jesus to do, you have found it in the Cooperative Program. There are other ways to do missions and support missions but none are as effective as the Cooperative Program. It sends missionaries, it strengthens churches, it sustains colleges and seminaries, it starts congregations, and it shines abroad the love and care of Jesus to the entire world. It is amazing!

Jim Futral likes CP Giving 🍷



Frank Page

president *SBC Executive Committee, Nashville*
interim pastor *First Church, Jackson*

I consider myself at least partially a Mississippian, as I have now for several months been the interim pastor at First Church, Jackson. To be a part of a church that strongly believes in cooperating together with all the other churches across the state and nation is truly a blessing. To be a part of a fellowship that truly believes that they can do more together than they can separately, brings warmth to my heart and a smile to my face. The writer of Hebrews tells us that we should run together the race that is set before us. I believe the plural pronoun is used for a reason. The race that God has for us is one that we run together. We thank God for the Cooperative Program and how it allows us to run the race with 44,000-plus other churches across the land.

Frank Page likes CP Giving 🍷



Rory Lee

executive director *The Baptist Children's Village*

I learned the importance of tithing by watching my parent's place money each payday in a bowl in the top drawer of the chest in their bedroom. On Sundays the money was put into offering envelopes. My brother and I each had an envelope, too, with a dollar in it which we took to Sunday School. Though I did not realize it then, those were my first gifts to the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program has had a major impact on my life. The education I received at Mississippi College, a Cooperative Program recipient, has certainly been a positive influence on my ministry. The institutions which I have had the privilege to serve — Mississippi College, William Carey University, Louisiana College, and The Baptist Children's Village — receive Cooperative Program funds that are used to enhance the futures of countless young adults and children. Through the Cooperative Program we are able to better serve together.

Rory Lee likes CP Giving 🍷



M. Dean Register

chairman *Miss. Baptist Education Commission*
senior pastor *Crosspoint Church, Hattiesburg*

Mississippi Baptists are impacting the world for Christ through the support of our three Baptist Colleges: Blue Mountain College, Mississippi College, and William Carey University. Approximately seven million Cooperative Program dollars are allocated by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board to undergird and enhance the mission of our colleges. The Education Commission serves as the liaison between Mississippi Baptists and the colleges. We are blessed to have dedicated and highly capable leadership through our college presidents: Dr. Bettye Coward (Blue Mountain College); Dr. Lee Royce (Mississippi College) and Dr. Tommy King (William Carey University). Their faithful service to our Lord Jesus and their visionary efforts in our colleges are an invaluable asset and a primary reason that our colleges are so strong and unified. The Cooperative Program support of Mississippi Baptists enables us to continue our pursuit of higher education with a deeper devotion to Christ and His mission.

M. Dean Register likes CP Giving 🍷

CENTURY CLUB

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:
\$25,000 and below

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
CROSS ROADS/CHOCTAW	\$1,948.52
SHILOH/ITAWAMBA	\$1,721.98
MT VERNON/MID-DELTA	\$1,634.89
PLEASANT GROVE/CLARKE	\$1,574.70
PILGRIMS REST/ATTALA	\$1,505.98
NEW BEGINNINGS/METRO	\$1,494.81
CAJCE/MARSHALL	\$1,468.25
BLUFF SPRINGS/KEMPER	\$1,432.67
LEARNED/METRO	\$1,403.79
GOOD HOPE/NEWTON	\$1,341.00

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:
\$25,000 - \$39,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
MYRTLE/UNION COUNTY	\$5,091.85
LEAF/GEORGE-GREENE	\$4,403.80
WEBB/NORTH CENTRAL	\$3,628.52
STEPPING STONE/UNION	\$3,794.18
CAMDEN/METRO	\$3,576.38
WEST DREW/MID-DELTA	\$3,584.31
CALUMN/CARROLL	\$3,561.75
CARSON/COVINGTON-JEFF DAVIS	\$3,611.80
SHALOM/LAWRENCE	\$3,506.05
PROVIDENCE/ITAWAMBA	\$3,399.80

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:
\$40,000 - \$54,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
DRY CREEK/WINSTON	\$6,145.00
LONGVIEW/GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$5,085.33
ENON/WINSTON	\$5,058.57
FAVETTE/UNION	\$4,980.10
SOUTH CROSSROADS/TISHOMINGO	\$4,912.83
UNITY/TISHOMINGO	\$4,893.78
COMMUNITY/BENTON-TIPPAH	\$4,765.42
SHAW/MID-DELTA	\$4,638.56
MT PLEASANT/HOLMES	\$4,588.00
CENTER GROVE/LAUDERDALE	\$4,572.11
IMMANUEL/PONTOTOC	\$4,498.51

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:
\$55,000 - \$74,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
SHERMAN/LEE	\$9,617.36
NEW HOPE/WEBSTER	\$9,533.00
TISHOMINGO CHAPEL/ALCORN	\$9,420.09
CARMEL/LAWRENCE	\$9,007.42
WHEELER/PRETTISS	\$7,319.54
EAST SALEM/GEORGE-GREENE	\$7,254.00
PINE GROVE/CLARKE	\$7,242.00
LIBERTY/NEWTON	\$7,065.00
MIDWAY/NEWTON	\$7,029.30
KREOLE AVE/JACKSON	\$6,869.00

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:
\$75,000 - \$99,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
CADARBY/WINSTON	\$15,115.12
NAGEES CREEK/WALTHALL	\$13,476.54
CROSBY/MISSISSIPPI	\$11,735.00
BEULAH/HUMPHREYS	\$11,376.48
MCCOOL/ATTALA	\$11,205.91
SABOUGLA/CALHOUN	\$11,183.84
OAKDALE/LAWRENCE	\$11,035.01
LIBERTY/PONTOTOC	\$10,498.75
WEIR/CHOCTAW	\$10,234.93
GRACE/WARREN	\$10,009.59

Together we are!

Or are we?

By David Michel
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

A long-held principle in Southern Baptist life has been that we can accomplish far more for the Kingdom of Christ by working together than by going it alone. Last year a new theme was designed to emphasize that belief: Together We Are.

The proof that we believe in this principle has been measured historically by our willingness to support missions by giving together through the Cooperative Program. As much as anything, the Cooperative Program has represented a coordinated financial planning process managed by state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. For more than 85 years, churches giving through the Cooperative

Program have provided a reliable stream of funding for major emphases that include seeking the lost, training ministers, equipping churches, sending missionaries, and caring for the less fortunate.

It is always good to make sure one's slogans match actual performance, so let's pose the question: "Are We Together?" Recent discussions in Baptist life considering a name change to clarify our identity or comparing Great Commission Giving to Cooperative Program giving could create the impression that we really are not together, but put arguments aside and look at the results.

Since 1925, when the Cooperative Program was affirmed, Southern Baptists have grown into the largest evangelical denomination in the world.

• Together we are commissioning and sending out over 10,000 missionaries.

• Together we are baptizing over 1,000 new believers every day.

• Together we are providing seminary education for one out of every five ministers in the world.

• Together we are worshiping and proclaiming the gospel in over 45,000 congregations every Sunday.

• Together we are making disciples of over 15 million church members, week-in and week-out.

• Together we are deploying an array of college professors, regional church growth consultants, and benevolent caregivers who are so influential that the news media believe we pose a threat to the free pursuit of secular, cultural values.

So, are we together or not? Just based on this short evaluation everyone should agree that we have accomplished much together. Together, We Are!

Does that mean our task together is complete? By no means. Together we can do much more. Just in Mississippi we have more than 2,000 churches, yet over two million people are unreached for Christ.

Our churches together last year gave almost \$400 million in offerings, with over \$32 million allocated for Cooperative Program. Our tithing potential based on resident membership and state personal income statistics should have exceeded \$970 million, with \$78 million allocated to Cooperative Program.

If we are together, then for every new dollar we give, \$25,000,000 in offerings could be generated at the local church level with two million dollars in new Cooperative Program gifts. Would you not like to see that kind of strength and generosity? Wouldn't God like to see His people come together like that?

Together We Can!

April 22 is listed on the denominational calendar as Cooperative Program Sunday. Consider sharing mission support information with your congregation that Sunday

(or another date if it is more appropriate) and celebrating Baptist mission accomplishments. Encourage your church to increase giving for local missions and global outreach.

Together We Are!

Michel is associate executive director for mission strategy at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson. To order resources for Cooperative Program Sunday, contact the MBCB Stewardship Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3347 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext 347. E-mail: lilewell@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcb.org/cp.

Michel



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

are

First things first, says pastor

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

For Pastor Robert Washington and the congregation of Oak Forest New Beginnings in south Jackson, there's never been a question about the importance of being a part of the Cooperative Program.

"It's the first check we write. It comes out whether or not there are other bills to be paid," Washington pointed out. "Those dollars are being used to bring the Gospel to people who would otherwise not get to hear it. Being involved in the Cooperative Program reflects the value of being Southern Baptist."

Under the Cooperative Program, church members contribute their tithes and offerings. A portion is retained for local church ministries and the remainder is sent to the state Baptist convention in which the church holds cooperating membership. The state Baptist convention retains a portion of the gifts for ministries at the state level, and sends the remainder to the Southern Baptist Convention to help fund ministries at that level.

The Cooperative Program is often referred to as one of the most effective

ways ever implemented to provide for the accomplishment of Christ's Great Commission, as found in Matthew 28:18-20.

The Oak Forest New Beginnings fellowship looks a lot like a growing number of Southern Baptist churches these days, according to statistics. The neighborhood has transitioned from a predominantly Caucasian setting to a predominantly African American one. New Beginnings, which is predominantly African American, shares the facilities of Oak Forest Church, which is predominantly Caucasian.

Washington, a brick mason by trade, has pastored Oak Forest New Beginnings for seven years. The church hasn't been without financial challenges, he pointed out. Oak Forest Church and First Church, Madison, have been instrumental in helping the congregation grow and reach out to the changing community around the church property.

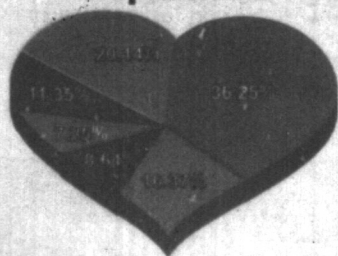
Washington believes Oak Forest New Beginnings is on the right track with its solid record of Cooperative Program support. "It's only right to support what supports you," he said.

2011 Cooperative Program Century Club Giving

Century Club churches are selected based on two criteria: Total church offerings and Cooperative Program Gifts. The ten largest Cooperative Program supporters in each offering category are listed on these pages. Offering data is drawn from the Annual Church Profile and the Cooperative Program data comes from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Financial Services Department.

Thank you for your gifts to the Cooperative Program.

2012 Mississippi Baptist Convention Cooperative Program Budget • \$32,329,059



- Global Missions/SBC - \$11,719,284
- Christian Education - \$6,511,501
- Church Growth Ministries - \$3,670,637
- State Benevolent Institutions - \$2,342,402
- Executive Leadership & Communication - \$2,793,869
- State Missions - \$5,291,366

CENTURY CLUB

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$100,000 - \$149,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
CATO/RANKIN	\$26,335.32
SKENE/MID-DELTA	\$23,621.88
BETHSAIDA/MONTGOMERY	\$21,219.32
PLEASANT HILL/CALHOUN	\$20,363.40
FBC TUNICA/NORTH DELTA	\$18,000.00
CHRIST/MID-DELTA	\$17,782.24
BRANCH/SCOTT	\$16,898.62
EASTWOOD/MID-DELTA	\$16,729.95
SHUBUTA/CLARKE	\$16,382.24
COLLEGE HILL HEIGHTS/LAFAYETTE	\$15,953.81

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$150,000 - \$249,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
SHILOH/LAWRENCE	\$41,471.32
SPRINGFIELD/SCOTT	\$39,006.14
NEW PROSPECT/LINCOLN	\$38,898.28
FOXWORTH/MARION	\$35,284.00
MORGAN CHAPEL/GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$34,782.42
CHUNKY/NEWTON	\$32,450.32
PUCKETT/RANKIN	\$32,193.40
FBC LEXINGTON/HOLMES	\$31,835.46
CENTRAL/PEARL RIVER	\$30,410.11
MT MORIAH/LINCOLN	\$30,345.28

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$250,000 - \$499,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FBC ELLISVILLE/JONES	\$100,777.07
PELAHATCHIE/RANKIN	\$68,614.62
CENTRAL/PIKE	\$67,646.11
FBC RICHTON/PERRY	\$64,713.00
NEW HEBRON/LAWRENCE	\$63,422.59
HICKORY/NEWTON	\$67,399.69
BARTON/GEORGE-GREENE	\$66,462.93
WHITESAND/COVINGTON-JEFF DAVIS	\$64,424.26
FBC COLLINS/COVINGTON-JEFF DAVIS	\$63,923.03
WESTWOOD/LAUDERDALE	\$63,920.96

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$500,000 - \$999,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FBC WINONA/MONTGOMERY	\$163,472.56
FBC HOUSTON/CHICKASAW	\$116,318.34
MONTICELLO/LAWRENCE	\$111,307.59
FBC COLLINSVILLE/LAUDERDALE	\$109,629.60
FBC RIPLEY/BENTON-TIPPAH	\$106,247.84
FBC MAGEE/SIMPSON	\$99,466.71
FBC NEWTON/NEWTON	\$97,345.74
NORTH COLUMBIA/MARION	\$96,609.41
WHEELER GROVE/ALCORN	\$94,206.89
FBC GAUTIER/JACKSON	\$92,230.25

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$1,000,000 and above

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FBC JACKSON/METRO	\$806,320.57
BROADMOOR/METRO	\$666,487.00
MORRISON HEIGHTS/METRO	\$466,695.62
HARRISBURG/LEE	\$466,627.10
FAIRVIEW/GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$424,002.69
FBC MADISON/METRO	\$362,730.84
CALVARY/LEE	\$351,698.30
EMMANUEL/NORTH CENTRAL	\$277,982.80
FBC BRANDON/RANKIN	\$275,696.00
NORTH OXFORD/LAFAYETTE	\$273,589.81

2012 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET

Global Missions/SBC

18.20%	International Mission Board	\$5,983,242
8.26%	North American Mission Board	\$2,670,704
8.03%	Theological Education	\$2,596,993
1.16%	SBC Operations	\$375,017
0.60%	Ethics/Religious Liberty Comm.	\$193,328
36.25%	SUBTOTAL	\$11,719,284

Christian Education

8.44%	Mississippi College	\$2,728,948
7.18%	William Carey University	\$2,320,742
3.25%	Blue Mountain College	\$1,050,687
1.10%	Board of Ministerial Education	\$358,507
0.17%	Education Commission	\$54,617
20.14%	SUBTOTAL	\$6,511,591

State Benevolent Institutions

2.69%	Church Retirement & Protection	\$870,000
1.94%	Baptist Children's Village	\$625,727
1.26%	MS Baptist Foundation	\$406,356
1.12%	Christian Action Commission	\$363,039
0.21%	Historical Commission	\$67,940
0.03%	MS Baptist Health Systems	\$9,340
7.25%	SUBTOTAL	\$2,342,402

State Missions

6.49%	Collegiate Ministry	\$2,098,189
2.62%	Woman's Missionary Union	\$847,890
2.22%	Men's Ministry	\$717,142
1.68%	Missions Mobilization	\$544,119
1.37%	Mission Strategy	\$447,460
1.14%	Church Planting	\$388,995
0.83%	Stewardship	\$267,575
16.35%	SUBTOTAL	\$6,291,366

Executive Leadership & Communication

2.63%	Business/Financial Services	\$848,212
1.78%	The Baptist Record	\$575,918
1.57%	Executive Administration	\$506,522
1.32%	Communication Services	\$426,274
1.01%	Computer Information Services	\$325,388
0.35%	Convention & Convention Comm.	\$111,575
8.66%	SUBTOTAL	\$2,793,909

Church Growth Ministries

2.53%	Discipleship & Family Ministry	\$816,688
1.61%	Capital Needs	\$521,181
1.56%	Sunday School	\$505,389
1.41%	Church Music	\$455,322
1.39%	Church Growth	\$450,713
1.19%	Pastor/Leadership Development	\$384,261
0.93%	Evangelism	\$300,502
0.73%	Church-Minister Relations	\$234,571
11.38%	SUBTOTAL	\$3,670,837

GRAND TOTAL
\$32,329,059

Fans of Cooperative Program Giving

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



Jimmy Porter

executive director *Christian Action Commission*

The Christian Action Commission (CAC) is an agency established in 1963 by the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The mission of CAC is to provide Mississippi Baptists with materials and leadership that emphasize Biblical teachings on moral, social, and ethical issues. As a ministry of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, CAC receives financial support through Cooperative Program gifts. Without this monetary support, CAC would cease to exist. The Cooperative Program is the strong foundation upon which the work and ministry of Mississippi Baptists rests. The Cooperative Program enables us to do things for churches that they likely could not do for themselves. For nearly 50 years, CAC has been standing alongside our churches fighting for Christian ideals. With the ongoing support of the Cooperative Program, CAC will continue this battle. Thank you, Cooperative Program, for your support!

Jimmy Porter likes CP Giving 🍷



Mark Slyter

president/CEO *Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, Inc., Jackson*

The Cooperative Program has helped sustain the Christian healing ministry at Mississippi Baptist Health Systems for over 100 years. Baptist Health Systems includes a 564-bed medical center offering a number of healthcare services and programs for people in every stage of life. Accredited by The Joint Commission, Baptist has achieved numerous quality awards and accolades. With 450 board-certified physicians, 20,500 patient admissions, 213,000 outpatient visits, 64,000 emergency room visits, and 13,400 surgical cases each year, the opportunity to witness in a time of need is tremendous. Through the services of our pastoral care department, church relations staff members, and many dedicated employees, we minister to hundreds of patients, family members, staff and our community every day. Our commitment at Baptist is to be Leaders in Healthcare, Followers in Faith so we can provide the best care possible to our community and continue our legacy of Baptist's Christian healing ministry.

Mark Slyter likes CP Giving 🍷



Daniel Hall

director *Mississippi Baptist Foundation*

Armstrong's famous words "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," left an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of many people within our nation and in the world over the past 40+ years. A giant step of a different kind occurred over 40 years prior to the lunar walk when a team of Christians known as Southern Baptists cast a vision for the world through a unique approach for funding missions and ministry. Since the inception of the Cooperative Program in 1925, Southern Baptists have participated in and contributed to the fulfillment of Christ's mandate to be witnesses for him in all the world (Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20). The Cooperative Program continues to be the most effective and efficient means for making a giant step toward reaching our world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Mississippi Baptist Foundation has the special privilege of participating in the blessings offered by the Cooperative Program. In fact, the Foundation administers several funds that represent individuals who, recognizing the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Cooperative Program, determined to favor the Cooperative Program through their Last Will and Testament. Your current and future involvement in the Kingdom ministries supported through CP resources will help perpetuate the "giant leap" vision of reaching a lost world with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Daniel Hall likes CP Giving 🍷

together

JUST FOR THE RECORD

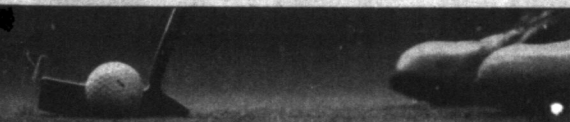
1. **First Church, Stonewall**, held a reception on March 11 to honor Jo Lynn Davidson for teaching Sunday School for the past 66 years. Pastor Jeff Jeffers presented Davidson with a crystal plaque.



1. Jo Lynn Davidson

ANNIVERSARIES/HOMECOMINGS

1. **Calvary Church, Saratoga**: Homecoming, April 1; Lunch 11 a.m., followed by preaching and singing.
2. **Plainway Church, Laurel**: 62nd Homecoming, April 1, 11 a.m., Corey Vermilyea, speaker; Anthony shows, music; Harold Ishee, welcome; dinner on the grounds following service.
3. **Pine Bluff Church, Sebastopol**: 100th Anniversary, April 14, 2 p.m.; Charles Doby Henry, speaker; Edward McMillan, presenter. Traditional Choctaw meal will be served to all attendees.



Mississippi Baptist Ministers

10TH ANNUAL
Two Man Golf Scramble
State Championship
MAY 14-15, 2012

1 p.m. Monday & 8 a.m. Tuesday • Patrick Farns • Pearl, MS
www.patrickfarns.org

In register, contact Rita McCallum at 601-297-3329, or mcallum@mbcbscramble.com
Registration Deadline: May 7, 2012 | Cost: \$100 per person



John T. Dorsa, Agent
6101 Ridgewood Road, Suite A
Jackson, MS 39211
Bus: 601-978-2302
www.jtdorsa.com



State Farm

Give yourself
a tax break.

Open an IRA by April 15.

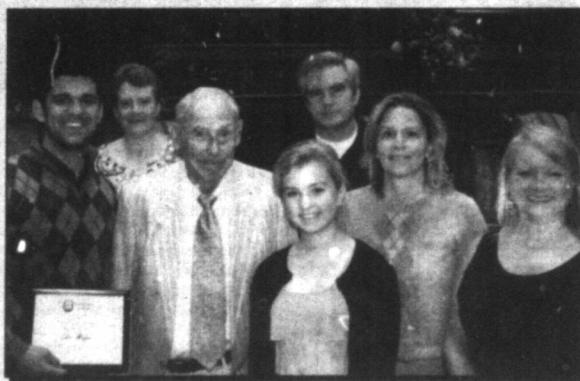
An IRA could reduce your taxes and it's a great way to invest in your future. Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there. CALL ME TODAY.

COLLEGE NEWS

1. **Mississippi College Student Government Association** President Taylor Stringer and English professor Jim Everett received the **HEADWAE** (Higher Education Appreciation Day Working for Academic Excellence) award at the 25th annual HEADWAE luncheon. The Mississippi Legislature established the program in 1987 to commend the state's academically talented students and faculty at colleges and universities in Mississippi. Shown are, front row: Ron Howard, vice president of academic affairs at MC; MC SGA president Taylor Stringer, student honoree; MC English professor James Everett, faculty honoree; Back row: Tony Stringer and Carla Stringer, parents of student honoree; and Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves.
2. **William Carey University** hosted Super Saturday for new incoming freshmen and transfer students on March 24 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Activities included sign-up for classes and sessions with academic, admissions, financial aid, and housing advisors. Lunch followed in Wilkes Dining Hall and participants were also invited to the Crusader baseball game at 1 p.m.
3. Jon Morgan (left) is the recipient of the 2012 Byrd Memorial Preaching Award at Mississippi College in Clinton. The annual award recognizes the talents of Mississippi College (MC) undergraduates who are on track to become future leaders in a Christian ministry. An MC committee including faculty members makes the selection. Pictured with Morgan are members of the Byrd family.



1. HEADWAE award



3. Jon Morgan and Byrd family

REVIVALS

1. **New Hope Church, Foxworth**: Revival, April 21-22. Saturday, fish fry 5 p.m., followed by service 6:30 p.m.; Sunday, service 10:30 p.m. followed by pot luck lunch and 6:30 p.m. service conducted by East Central Community College Baptist Student Union. Sun. speaker - Louis Zinc.

www.mbcbs.org

EASTER SERVICES

1. **Belle Fountain Church, Ocean Springs**: "Calvary's Story," a dramatic presentation of the final earthly days of Christ, on April 6, 7, 8 at 6 p.m. No admission charge. Nursery provided.
2. **Meadowview Church, Starkville**, will present "Lamb of God," on March 30 at 7 p.m., and April 1 at 10:15 a.m.
3. **First Church, Lumberton: Community Resurrection Fellowship Service**; April 1, 6 p.m.; pot luck finger food fellowship to follow.
4. **First Church, Lumberton**: Easter Sunrise Service, April 8, 7 a.m. in Fellowship Hall Courtyard, followed by continental breakfast; Sunday School, 8:45 a.m. follow; Easter Cantata, 10 a.m.
5. **Mount Olivet Church, Forest**: "Easter Passion Drama," April 1, 6 p.m. Presented by James Hudgins and the East Central Community College Baptist Student Union.

STAFF CHANGES

1. **Trinity Church, Monroe Association**, has called Justin Simmons as pastor. Pictured with Simmons is his fiancée Faith Deaton. They will be married in May.

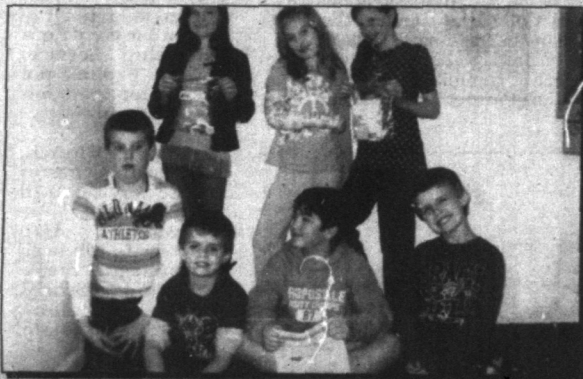


1. Simmons and Deaton

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Riverside Church deacon ordination



2. Trinity Church Girls and Guys in Action



4. DeKalb Church ordination



5. Enterprise Church, Clarke Association

1. **Riverside Church, Money,** recently ordained three deacons. Pictured with Pastor Lynn Welch and Deacon Chairman Arvell Youngblood are Mike Turner, Charles Harper, and Charles Elliott.

2. **Trinity Church, Monroe Association,** Girls and Guys in Action recently participated in the children's ministry by collecting boxtops and labels for education.

3. **First Church, Ridgeland,** will host Dennis Swanberg, "America's Minister of Encouragement," on April 1 at 10 a.m. during the morning worship service.

4. **DeKalb Church, DeKalb,** ordained Aaron "Dusty" Coward to the Gospel ministry on the evening of March 11. Pictured with Coward is his wife Britiany and James Ruffin, pastor.

5. **Enterprise Church, Clarke Association,** recently held a special service to honor Taylor and Katherine Wallace (seated) for 50 years of ministry in Enterprise and the Clarke County area. Commemorative plaques, certificates of appreciation, and a love offering were presented to the couple. Pictured with the Wallaces are (from left) Jimmy Crane, Mayor Larry Murray, Grady Crowell, Ken Purvis, Jud Gartman, Beth Etheridge, and John Henry.

6. **Philadelphia Church, Etta,** presented Sunday School Perfect Attendance Awards to: 15 months - Thomas Spence, Janice Nolan, Martha Jane Cooper, Twanda Coffey; 12 months - James Major Coffey, Jean Spence, Caleb Nolan; 6 months - Paul Nolan; 3 months - Jerry Bishop, Kaye Bishop, April Rollins, Keith Melson, Caleb Melson, and Nick Smith.

7. To conclude the Week of Prayer for North American Missions, the Women on Mission of **First Church, Sumrall,** honored volunteers and staff of the Lamar Association with a luncheon. Janice Russell, Woman's Missionary



6. Philadelphia Church, Etta



7. First Church, Sumrall



8. Dixie Church, Hattiesburg

Union Director; Sue Babington, Women on Mission Facilitator; and Danny Henderson, Lamar Association Missions Director.

The members who completed the course include Riley Stephens, Drew Ryals, and Ryle Harvison. They were presented with a Bible and a certificate.

8. **Dixie Church, Hattiesburg,** members who completed a six-week Bible study titled, "I'm a Christian Now!" are congratulated by Pastor Bobby Holder (left) and Student Pastor Neil Harvison (right), who taught the course.

9. The sanctuary choir of **First Church, Calhoun City,** will present The Lion Became a Lamb, on Apr. 1 at 6 p.m. The Lord's Supper will be observed. Tim Hardaway, minister of music.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Jesus Died For Our Sins

Matthew 26:26-29, 36-39; 27: 45-46, 50-54

By Betty Davis

George Bennard, a traveling evangelist said, "I was praying for a full understanding of the Cross of Christ. I read and studied and prayed. The Christ of the Cross became more than a symbol...it was like seeing John 3:16 leave the printed page, take form, and act out the meaning of redemption". (Then Sings My Soul) During my research on this lesson, I too, can recall my own sincere feelings about Jesus Christ and His sufferings. Not just His hours on the cross, but for His whole life. He knew His Father's plan for His life of thirty-three years. Today, it would be like us knowing we needed an important medical procedure or extensive dental work and we dreaded the day it was to occur. Family and friends who have never had that work done can't

fully understand your anxiety. Jesus had told his disciples many times what would happen, but they couldn't fully comprehend what He meant. He was God's Son — they were human beings.

Jesus Death Brought Forgiveness of Sins

Matthew 26:26-29

Jesus and His disciples were in a large room where they would partake of the Passover Supper together. They were all casually relaxing around the table when Jesus talked about why He would die and shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins. While they were eating, Jesus took bread and when He had given thanks, He gave it to His disciples saying, "Take and eat; this is My body". Jesus was an excellent teacher and He used symbols and illustrations



Davis

to explain His thoughts for easy comprehension. (Barclay) Then, He took a cup, gave thanks again and gave it to them. He explained that the fruit of the vine represented His blood of the covenant which was poured out for the forgiveness of their sins. Jesus was actually saying, "Because of my life, and above all because of my death, a new relationship has become possible between you and God". (Barclay)

Jesus Death Fulfilled God's Plan

Matthew 26:36-39

After the Passover Supper, Jesus and the disciples actually sang a hymn (Psalm 136) and walked through the Eastern Gate (known today as St. Stephens Gate), crossed the Kidron Brook, toward a garden of olive trees known as Gethsemane. He told the disciples to sit and pray while He, Peter, James, and John went farther on. Jesus experienced a

burden of sorrow and sadness and explained that His soul felt overwhelmed with sorrow. He told them to stay there and keep watch. Jesus wanted to be alone when He prayed earnestly to His Father. "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me, yet not as I will, but as you will." Jesus struggled deeply knowing God's plan was for Him to die for us, and He wanted to please His Father. The cup seems to mean Jesus' death and suffering, though it is not explained. (Broadman Bible Commentary) As adults, we agree that obeying God's plan is not always easy. Even Jesus realized that, but what He did is a good example for what we should do...listen and obey God.

Jesus Death Revealed

He Was God's Son

Matthew 27:45-46, 50-54

Jesus was crucified, Jewish time, at nine o'clock a.m. From noon until three o'clock, darkness covered the country of Judea. About three o'clock, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken

me?" (HCSB v. 46) He'd been on the cross for six hours. Some of them around the cross wondered to whom he was speaking. Possibly Elijah or a sun god? John 17:28-30 says, "Some time later, Jesus said He was thirsty. They soaked a sponge in vinegar, put it on a stalk of the hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When He received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished", then bowed His head and gave up His spirit. The curtain of the Temple was torn from top to bottom, the earth shook and rocks split. Nearby tombs broke open and saints of God were raised to life; later to enter Jerusalem and appear to many people. When the Centurian and his guards saw all this happening, they were fearful and exclaimed, "Surely He was the Son of God!" A victor will never let go of His faith. The victor is the man who has been beaten to the depths and still holds on to God, for that is what Jesus did!" (Barclay)

Davis is a member of Fellowship Church, Meridian.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Live to Benefit Others

Luke 6:12-8:56

By Kelly Mitchell

Have you ever stopped to consider that if we could eliminate selfishness in our society, we would no longer need most of our government and the majority of our laws? Does this sound like the kind of world you want to live in, a world where you can trust every stranger but, more importantly, your own family and friends? The good news is that such a society will exist again when Jesus assumes His rightful throne in Jerusalem. The bad news is that, since Christ is our head, the Christian church should already be this kind of place.

The Holman Christian Study Bible at Lifeway's mystudybible.com, informs that verse 27 of Luke 6 begins the Sermon on the Plain and

describes the nature of the follower of Christ. Read that sentence again. Chapter 6 is not a list of beliefs. False religions, atheists, and agnostics would agree with all of these standards so what makes Christians any better? Agreeing with all of these standards makes us a "moral" people, just like every other group. Genuine commitment to these standards is the great gulf that divides and few can cross.

Act With Love (Luke 6:27-35-36). Christians are often thought of as weak or "soft" when, in fact, there is no calling that requires as much bravery and character. Jesus does not say to run from an enemy or even from a fight. He warns that those living



Mitchell

His lifestyle will face these things and if someone wants to hit you so you will stop trying to witness to them, let them hit both cheeks but do not stop. We would bear their protests to stop them from stepping into an empty elevator shaft, how much more so to stop them from stepping into the Abyss?

Act With Unselfishness (Luke 6:30-34). How many times have you been approached by a beggar at a convenience store? Conventional wisdom is to not give them money because they will only buy alcohol or drugs with it. The instruction I read here is that if God puts a needy person in our path, it is up to them what they do with it. I do not think there is anything wrong with buying them food, especially if you sit with them and share but there are also times God does ask that we blindly meet the need. The test is theirs, not yours. Besides, anything you give God returns

with interest rates that would make Warren Buffet cry.

Act With Concern (Luke 6:37-38, 41-42). People often misuse Luke 6:37-38 as a means of justifying themselves against a critic. There are some gray areas in the Bible but there are also some hard-core, absolute, rights and wrongs. Uhm... The Ten Commandments? Anyone? We are not forbidden from calling right what is right and wrong what is wrong when we do so from Biblical authority and not personal preference. Dismissing someone because we do not like them or do not agree with them is what is condemned. If we want to correct someone, we must be able to point out their sin in the Bible. If the sin is only a sin in our minds or from a source other than God's word, it is better to remain silent; otherwise we serve to increase our own sin to the size of a telephone pole.

Act With Obedience (Luke 6:46-48). And thus the writer of this lesson delivers the death blow to our pride and independence. The very name Christian implies that we are "Christ Like."

We can believe everything the Bible says but Satan and his demons also believe that much. False religions, atheists, and agnostics also think that these are a bunch of good ideas but we do not count them as Christians, do we? The lost fall aside because, to them, the Bible is an excellent philosophy of a utopian ideal but not practical in the real world. Many in the church, I am afraid, share their short-sightedness. The world knows to treat others like we want to be treated. Christ's followers are to treat others better than we want to be treated.

Teachers, read John 6:60-68 to prepare to guide these discussions. Questions for discussion: (1) Which laws go away if we completely eliminated selfishness? (2) Why does the modern church need so many rules? (3) Is your class a place that reflects these standards to visitors? What impact would full compliance have? What adjustment is God pointing you to?

Mitchell is pastor of Main Street Church, Goodman.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either: (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

THE BAPTIST Record

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either e-mail, CD or DVD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

LifeWay survey reveals Bible reading habits

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Among regular Bible readers, more than a third indicate they read it nearly every day and typically use one primary version of the Bible. However, three-quarters are open to using other translations.

LifeWay Research polled 2,000 Americans for a study on how American adults read the Bible. The study was conducted through a demographically representative online panel. All qualifying participants indicated they read their Bibles at least monthly, either for personal study or as part of a family activity.

People who read the Bible only in a corporate setting like a worship service, were not included.

When asked, "About how often do you read the Bible either by yourself or together with family members as part of a private activity?"

- 37% said nearly every day.

- 22% read it three to five times a week, while another 22% read it once or twice a week.

- 11% read it two or three times a month, and eight percent read the Bible about once a month.

On average, Bible readers in the United States personally own 3.6 copies of Scripture. Eighty-four percent of readers have more than one Bible.

Three-quarters of Bible readers (74%) have one primary Bible that they use most of the time while the other 26% tend to use different Bibles for different situations. Among those who use a variety of Bibles, 75% consult varying translations.

Yet preferring one translation does not mean they have an exclusive commitment to it. While 26% of Bible readers are only willing to use one specific translation, 74% identify themselves as "open to using different translations of the Bible."

The higher the reader's education and household income, the less likely they are to use one primary Bible most of the time, the study

revealed. Seventy-nine percent of readers with an annual household income less than \$30,000 use one primary Bible compared to 68% of readers with income of \$100,000 or more.

Eighty-three percent of readers whose highest level of education is high school have one primary Bible compared to 66% of readers with a graduate degree.

"When people say 'my Bible,' that has a meaning that includes translation," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "Bible

readers usually have multiple Bibles but three out of four have one physical Bible that they use most of the time."

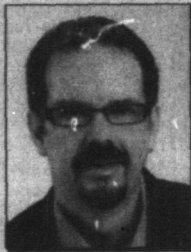
When it comes to how a preferred translation is selected, 75% of regular Bible readers personally chose the version they use most while 19% had it selected for them by someone else (such as a gift). Six percent do not remember how they arrived at their preferred version.

Nine out of 10 Bible readers are satisfied with the version they use most for personal reading. That includes 56% who are completely satisfied and 35% who are mostly satisfied. Only two percent are mostly dissatisfied with the translation they use, and four percent are completely dissatisfied.

The study also revealed that in a typical month, 85% of regular Bible readers attend worship, 72% read religious books, 53% attend Sunday School or Christian education classes, 51% attend a small group, 50% read religious magazines, and 47% are volunteer leaders.

Stetzer concluded, "We learn from this study among American Bible readers that owning multiple Bibles is much more prevalent than regularly investing time in reading it."

The LifeWay Research survey was conducted in August 2011 via online panel. A representative sample of U.S. adult population was invited to participate. Two thousand people who read the Bible once a month or more qualified for the study.

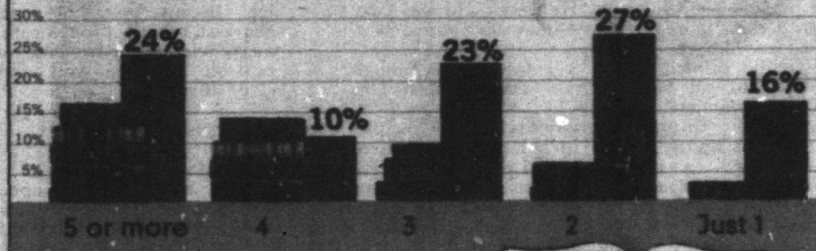


Stetzer

BIBLE READERSHIP SURVEY

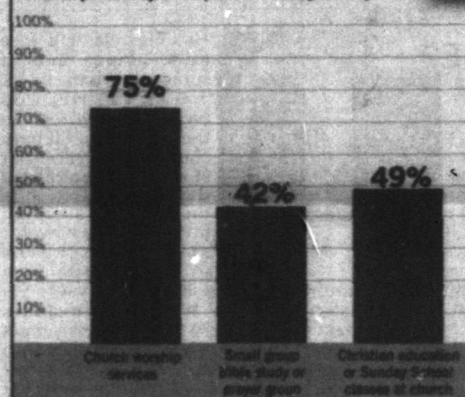
Number of Bibles owned

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as part of a family activity



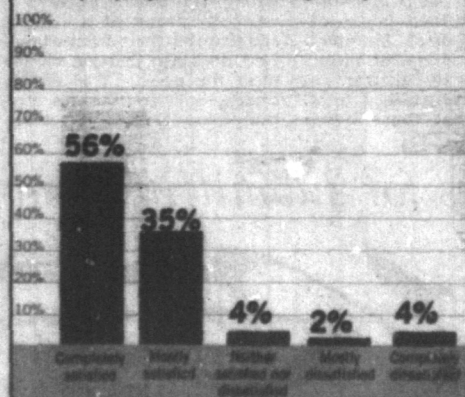
Group situations where Bible readers read the Bible

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as part of a family activity

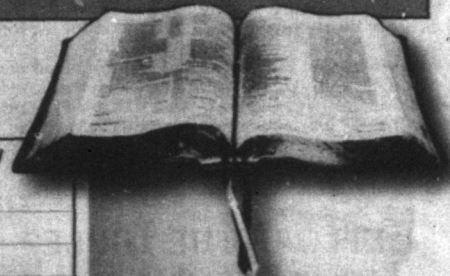


Satisfaction with primary Bible translation

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as part of a family activity

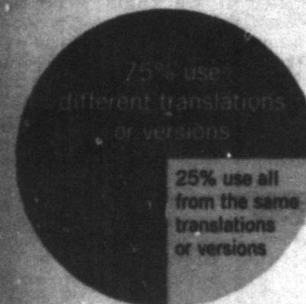


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Using different versions

Among Americans who use different Bibles for different situations/reasons



Using different Bibles

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as a part of a family activity

